

Message Text

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ACTION EB-08

INFO OCT-01 ARA-14 ISO-00 CTME-00 INSE-00 AGRE-00
VOE-00 CA-01 TRSE-00 CAB-05 CIAE-00 COME-00
DODE-00 DOTE-00 INR-07 NSAE-00 FAA-00 L-03 /039 W
-----107213 101818Z /43

P 101644Z JAN 78

FM AMEMBASSY NASSAU

TO SECSTATE WASHDC PRIORITY 285

UNCLAS NASSAU 0058

E.O. 11652: N/A

TAGS: EAIR, BF, US

SUBJ: DEDICATION U.S. PRECLEARANCE FACILITIES IN FREEPORT

REF: 77 NASSAU 2064

FOR EB/TT/OA; U.S. CUSTOMS; INS; AGRICULTURE

1. THE U.S. PRECLEARANCE FACILITIES AT FREEPORT INTERNATIONAL AIRPORT WERE DEDICATED AT NOON, JANUARY 7, 1978 WITH MORE THAN 250 INVITED GUESTS PRESENT AT CEREMONY - ALL SPECIAL GUESTS OF INTERCONTINENTAL DIVERSIFIED CORPORATION AND THE PORT AUTHORITY GROUP OF COMPANIES. GCOB DIGNITARIES ATTENDING INCLUDED RT. HON. LYNDEN O. PINDLING, THE PRIME MINISTER, WHO DELIVERED THE KEYNOTE ADDRESS, AND BALTRON BETHEL, DIRECTOR, MINISTRY OF TOURISM AND CIVIL AVIATION (WHO REPRESENTED MINISTER CLEMENT MAYNARD) WHO ALSO DELIVERED REMARKS. OTHERS INCLUDED SENATOR KENDAL W. NOTTAGE, MINISTER OF YOUTH, SPORTS AND COMMUNITY AFFAIRS; AND VALENTINE GRIMES, SHADRACK MORRIS, HENRY BOWEN, MAURICE MOORE, AND GARNET LEVARITY - ALL MEMBERS OF PARLIAMENT.

2. I HEADED THE U.S. DELEGATION OF DIGNITARIES ATTENDING AND DELIVERED THE PRINCIPAL REMARKS ON BEHALF OF OUR GOVERNMENT. OTHER US DIGNITARIES INCLUDED GLEN DICKENSON, DEPUTY COMMISS-
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IONER OF IMMIGRATION AND NATURALIZATION SERVICE, BOTH OF WHOM MADE SHORT REMARKS AT THE CEREMONY. OTHER IMPORTANT CUSTOMS, INS AND AGRICULTURE OFFICIALS FROM THE MIAMI DISTRICT WERE ALSO PRESENT.

3. IN MY REMARKS I NOTED THAT THIS PRECLEARANCE FACILITY WAS ONE OF THE ITEMS WHICH PRIME MINISTER PINDLING MENTIONED

TO PRESIDENT CARTER DURING THEIR BILATERAL MEETING LAST SEPTEMBER AND THAT IT WAS HIGH ON MY AGENDA OF THINGS TO ACCOMPLISH AT AN EARLY DATE AFTER MY ARRIVAL. I NOTED HOW PLEASED I WAS THAT THE FACILITY WAS BEING DEDICATED SO QUICKLY IN THE NEW YEAR. THE THREE PRECLEARANCE SERVICES - CUSTOMS, INS AND AGRICULTURE - ARE TO BE CONGRATULATED ON THE OUTSTANDING JOB THEY DID IN READYING THE FACILITY SO QUICKLY. THE COOPERATION AMONG THESE AGENCIES, THE GCOB, PORT AUTHORITY GROUP OF COMPANIES, AND U.S. STATE DEPARTMENT WAS EXCELLENT.

4. PM PINDLING IN HIS REMARKS NOTED THAT INAUGURATION OF THIS FACILITY WOULD BE A BOON TO TOURISM IN 1978 IN WHAT WAS EXPECTED TO BE THE "BEST YEAR OF TOURISM FOR THE BAHAMAS". AFTER NOTING THE BENEFITS TO BE DERIVED FROM THE PRECLEARANCE FACILITIES, PM MENTIONED THE GOOD COOPERATION THE GCOB "HAD RECEIVED FROM THE AMERICAN EMBASSY IN NASSAU, THE DEPARTMENT OF STATE AND OTHER U.S. GOVERNMENT AGENCIES IN BRINGING THIS PROJECT TO FRUITION. PRIME MINISTER PINDLING STATED THAT THE COMPLETION OF THIS FACILITY SO EARLY IN THE NEW U.S. GOVERNMENT ADMINISTRATION AUGURS WELL, AND SHOULD BE AN INDICATION FOR SUCCESSFUL COMPLETION OF NEGOTIATIONS ON OTHER ITEMS WHICH OUR GOVERNMENTS WILL BE DISCUSSING THIS YEAR. THE PRIME MINISTER IS EXTREMELY INTERESTED IN AMERICAN AIRLINES' CURRENT PETITION BEFORE THE CAB, AND I URGE THE DEPARTMENT TO KEEP US ADVISED ON THIS MATTER.

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Message Attributes

Automatic Decaptioning: X
Capture Date: 01 jan 1994
Channel Indicators: n/a
Current Classification: UNCLASSIFIED
Concepts: CUSTOMS DUTIES, REPRESENTATION AT CEREMONIES
Control Number: n/a
Copy: SINGLE
Draft Date: 10 jan 1978
Decaption Date: 01 jan 1960
Decaption Note:
Disposition Action: n/a
Disposition Approved on Date:
Disposition Case Number: n/a
Disposition Comment:
Disposition Date: 01 jan 1960
Disposition Event:
Disposition History: n/a
Disposition Reason:
Disposition Remarks:
Document Number: 1978NASSAU00058
Document Source: CORE
Document Unique ID: 00
Drafter: n/a
Enclosure: n/a
Executive Order: N/A
Errors: N/A
Expiration:
Film Number: D780014-1212
Format: TEL
From: NASSAU
Handling Restrictions: n/a
Image Path:
ISecure: 1
Legacy Key: link1978/newtext/t19780181/aaaacqck.tel
Line Count: 94
Litigation Code IDs:
Litigation Codes:
Litigation History:
Locator: TEXT ON-LINE, ON MICROFILM
Message ID: 06aceae4-c288-dd11-92da-001cc4696bcc
Office: ACTION EB
Original Classification: UNCLASSIFIED
Original Handling Restrictions: n/a
Original Previous Classification: n/a
Original Previous Handling Restrictions: n/a
Page Count: 2
Previous Channel Indicators: n/a
Previous Classification: n/a
Previous Handling Restrictions: n/a
Reference: 77 NASSAU 2064
Retention: 0
Review Action: RELEASED, APPROVED
Review Content Flags:
Review Date: 23 feb 2005
Review Event:
Review Exemptions: n/a
Review Media Identifier:
Review Release Date: n/a
Review Release Event: n/a
Review Transfer Date:
Review Withdrawn Fields: n/a
SAS ID: 3801395
Secure: OPEN
Status: NATIVE
Subject: DEDICATION U.S. PRECLEARANCE FACILITIES IN FREEPORT
TAGS: EAIR, BF, US
To: STATE
Type: TE
vdkgvwkey: odb://SAS/SAS.dbo.SAS_Docs/06aceae4-c288-dd11-92da-001cc4696bcc
Review Markings:
Sheryl P. Walter
Declassified/Released
US Department of State
EO Systematic Review
20 Mar 2014
Markings: Sheryl P. Walter Declassified/Released US Department of State EO Systematic Review 20 Mar 2014